

Abstracts

Tibet as a Stateless Society and Some Islamic Parallels

GEOFFREY SAMUEL Pages 000–000

Tibet is the most numerically significant society practicing Vajrayana (Tantric) Buddhism. The unusual features of religion in Tibetan society are often understood in terms of differences between Vajrayana and other forms of Buddhism. The author suggests here that Tibet is not a “typical” Vajrayana society compared to the Newars or the Balinese, and that what is special about religion in Tibet is related to structural differences between Tibetan society and Buddhist states elsewhere in Asia. Tibet historically has been a region where a centralized state was barely achievable, and Tibetan political structures have more in common with stateless societies than with states. Buddhism in Tibetan society has analogies with Islam in structurally similar Islamic societies.

The Boundaries of Compassion: Buddhism and National Tradition in Japanese Pilgrimage

JAMES H. FOARD Pages 000–000

The author demonstrates how a Buddhist pilgrimage tradition affected symbolic and social changes in early modern Japan. After exploring the history of the Saikoku pilgrimage and its practice in the Tokugawa period, he suggests that Victor Turner’s theories of “*communitas*” and “liminality,” while adequately explaining the “social modality” of the pilgrimage, do not account for the religious and cultural paradigms encountered by the pilgrim. To understand these paradigms, eighteenth and nineteenth century pilgrim guides are analyzed to show how the semantic field of the pilgrim integrated the universal salvation of Buddhism with a distinctly national tradition.

New Policies in the Communes: Notes on Rural Societal Structures in China, 1976–1981

JÜRGEN DOMES Pages 000–000

Since 1978 dramatic changes have occurred in Chinese rural societal policies with respect to the three levels of collective agricultural production; the parameters for family sideline occupations and village markets; and the extension and allocation of private plots. In general, these changes reflected a distinct retreat from the former emphasis on collective production. The author describes the changes that have taken place in rural societal policies and discusses the difficulties that have arisen in implementing the new policies. He also comments on statements by the current leadership used to support and justify new policies.

What is Happening in Classical Indology?—A Review Article

FRITS STAAL Pages 000–000

Most of the books reviewed in this article deal with Indian philosophy, mythology, or the Vedas, but other recent publications are discussed. The author provides a general assessment of the present state of the art in classical Indology. In spite of the venerable antiquity of the subject, not all pertinent studies are esoteric or dull. There have been new and unexpected discoveries along with solid and original contributions that have wide-ranging implications. Many views that are commonly held are now seen to derive from misconceptions and to stand in need of revision. Topics treated are Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism, Tantrism, and Shamanism; contacts between India and Central Asia, and the Indianization of Asia; Soma and *karma*; ritual, epic, psychology, sex, and grammar.